

Mental Health Carers Participation And Representation Program E Bulletin - 24 November 2011

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NEWS

CARERS

Mental Health Carers Voice (MHCV), the Carers ACT mental health carer participation and representation program, aims to encourage and support Canberra's mental health carer population in leading, influencing and advocating for positive systemic change within the ACT mental health system. In the expanded MHCV there are many exciting and interesting ways to have your say.

COMMITTEE WORK PROGRESS

This month we received two committee reports from John Tucker who is the Carer Representative for Policy Committee. This committee developed a draft Clinical Supervision Policy and Practice and a draft Clinical Management Policy and Practice. Via the MHCV e-bulletin, Carers ACT sought views and input from mental health carers and developed responses for John to bring back to his committee. "This has been a very useful process for me and Carers ACT's coordination in developing a formal response has really helped me in my role as Carer Representative," said John Tucker.

Clinical Supervision Response can be found [here](#);
Clinical Management Response is [here](#). John would like comments on another Policy, the Personal Property Searching Policy which can be found [here](#)

Carers ACT also called a meeting to review the draft Model of Care for the new Adult Acute Mental Health Inpatient Unit (AAMHIU) with a presentation from ACT Government's Kevin Kidd. The feedback from carers is

now being developed into a formal response and will be published in the next edition of e-bulletin.

Judy Bentley, the ACT carer representative on the National Mental Health Consumer and Carer Forum (NMHCCF) was part of developing the Unravelling Psychosocial Disability report. A separate paragraph, including a link to the report is included in Federal News.

MARK YOUR DIARY – MORE OPPORTUNITIES TO HAVE YOUR SAY

Carer Representation is about representing the views of a diverse range of Carers. MHCV is working on putting different mechanisms in place so that more mental health carers can have their say and influence systemic change that's important to them.

End of Year Celebration: Thursday 15th December from 6 – 8 pm at the Belconnen Arts Centre. This forum will announce the new Mental Health Carer Representatives, as well as the launch of the new Mental Health Carers Voice Website with on line discussion capability. Opportunities for questions and further information on the Mental Health Carers Voice will be provided.

Carer Representative Forums: These forums give Carer Representatives an opportunity to meet, network and consult on systemic issues across all committees and subcommittees. The first of these forums will be held at Carers ACT, Holt on **Thursday 2nd February** from 12 – 2 pm. Lunch will be included. MHCV anticipate hosting these forums every six weeks and will alternate between north and south side as well as day and evening forums. MHCV will also link these to some of the **Mental Health Carers Issues Forums** which are held quarterly.

All mental health carers are invited to attend these forums, with other invited guests. The aim is to flesh out current mental health policy reforms, share information and invite speakers on topics of interest. These forums may also include off site visits to the AAMHIU or other mental health facilities/services in and around the ACT region.

The MHCV **Website and Online Discussion Forum** will be launched at our Christmas Forum on **15th December**. This is a dedicated website for the MHCV program. The website will be a useful resource of news, services, policy reforms, regular e-Bulletin news updates, reports from carer representatives etc. The online Discussion Forum will be a moderated forum dedicated to comments and discussion about the ACT mental health system. It can be used for quick consultations for carer representatives and others.

MHCV **Carer Representation Training** will be held for all new representatives, and for any others who wish to join in. There are three sessions to this training. The first of these: Committees and How They Work; will be held on **Tuesday 28th February** from 6 – 9 pm at the Smith Family building in Woden. Two further sessions, Speaking up: Being Assertive in Representation & Advocacy and Media Engagement will be held in April and May.

POLLIES TO PEDAL FOR CARERS

The annual charity fundraising bike ride 'Pollie Pedal' will donate proceeds from their 2012 event to Carers Australia. Leader of the Opposition Tony Abbott made the announcement on 1st November at The Cottage, a Carers ACT respite centre for people with dementia. The bike ride is from Geelong to Canberra. Pollie Pedal is an annual fund raising activity that has been happening since 1998. Over these years, cyclists have ridden approximately 14,000 kms and raised nearly \$2M for charity. They expect to raise around \$250,000 in 2012.

FEDERAL

NMHCCF CALLS FOR IMPROVED PSYCHOSOCIAL DISABILITY SUPPORT

A position statement by the NMHCCF, Unravelling Psychosocial Disability, was launched on the 22nd

November at Parliament House by Senator Jan McLucas, Parliamentary Secretary for Ageing, Disability and Carers. This document describes the needs of people with psychosocial disability (often referred to as psychiatric disability) and the issues that affect their capacity to participate in the community. The statement urgently calls for improved support for people with psychosocial disability related to mental health conditions. This is a significant shift in attitude by policy makers and the community. In August 2011, the NMHCCF welcomed the inclusion of people with a psychosocial disability in the proposed National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

More on the NMHCCF and their position statements can be found here: www.nmhccf.org.au

COLLABORATION FOR BETTER MENTAL HEALTH

The early detection and treatment of neurodegenerative disorders (like Alzheimers & Parkinsons disease) and psychoses (like schizophrenia) is a step closer with the launch on 17th November of the Cooperative Research Centre (CRC) for Mental Health. The CRC will focus on research to find biomarkers for diagnosing the early onset of these diseases and psychoses. Minister for Innovation Senator Kim Carr highlighted the importance of the CRC for Mental Health, saying that nearly half of Australians will experience a mental illness at some stage in their lives, which will impact of themselves, their families and the community. The aim of the research is to enable more accurate diagnosis and earlier treatment leading to delaying the onset, or reducing the severity, of these conditions, and thus improving people's quality of life.

To learn more about the CRC and the work they do, visit www.crc.gov.au

\$3.2M PILOT OPENS DOOR FOR PEOPLE WITH MENTAL ILLNESS

An innovative project for Victoria that helps people with a severe mental illness into private sector housing has been unveiled by their Minister for Mental Health Mary Wooldridge. On 3rd November the Mental Illness Fellowship's 'Doorway' project was launched. Doorway is funded to provide secure housing for 50 people with a severe mental illness in the private rental market and support them over three years to maintain tenancy. The project is being delivered by the Mental Illness Fellowship in partnership with the Victorian Coalition Government,

clinical mental health services and the Real Estate Institute of Victoria (REIV). It aims to encourage recovery for people with mental illness by supporting them to build lives within their community.

For more on the Doorway project, go to: www.mifellowship.org/content/doorway

NB. Carers ACT is holding a summit on supported accommodation in March. More details on this event will follow in 2012, and can be found in the December Carers Circle.

FORENSIC MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES LACKING

The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists (RANZCP) is calling for better mental health services for people within the criminal justice system. People with mental illness are imprisoned at a higher rate than the general population, with one-third of prisoners having had a mental health disorder and one-fifth reporting self-harm. Despite the very high rates of mental illness in prisoners there is a drastic lack of mental health services.

According to the recent The Health of Australian Prisoners 2010 report, prison health clinics are understaffed and most primary care in prison is provided by nurses with only 15% of prisoners' clinic visits being with a medical practitioner. Only 4% of clinic visits are with a mental health team or nurse and 2% with a psychiatrist. "Psychiatric clinics in prisons are limited and stretched by the huge demand for services. Similarly there are inadequate mental health workers and psychologists to provide comprehensive care and rehabilitation services" said Dr Tomsic, President of the RANZCP.

To read the full media release, go to <http://www.ranzcp.org/latest-news/forensic-mental-health-services-lacking.html> To read The Health of Australia's Prisoners 2010 go to <http://www.aihw.gov.au/publication-detail/?id=10737420111&tab=2> Mental health is in chapter 3.

ACT

CONSUMER AND CARER CAUCUS

The ACT Consumer Carer Caucus is a forum for mental health consumers and carers in the ACT to meet, share information, form partnerships and be involved in the development and implementation of mental health reform. Caucus is a pluralistic, inclusive, democratic forum where consumers and carers can participate and contribute when, and in the way, they are able.

Caucus meets regularly, and is open to all interested mental health carers and consumers. Carers ACT, through the Mental Health Carers Voice, and the Mental Health Consumer Network are partners with the Mental Health Community Coalition in the Consumer and Carer Caucus. For more information please contact Simon Viereck on 6249 7756 or simon.viereck@mhccact.org.au

You can also visit the website at: <http://www.mhccact.org.au/cms/index.php?page=Caucus>

NEXUS HUMAN SERVICES

Nexus Human Services (formerly Work Ways) is an ACT employment agency specialising in finding and supporting employment for people with a mental illness. Along with a new name, they have embraced a new model for their service. They support both the person and the employing organisation in the initial process to enable successful employment outcomes for both parties. They offer regular contact with people to discuss their progress as well as group training for a range of workplace skills. The support system Nexus has in place underpins the successful employment for people with mental illness.

Nexus supports staff at the Spence IGA who recently won the ACT Chief Minister's Inclusion Award for Inclusion in Small Business. On presenting the award it was revealed that Spence IGA now fulfils at least 50% of its staffing needs by employing people who are living with psychosocial disabilities. The IGA has become a showcase for the benefits and rewards that can be gained from employing people with disabilities

in businesses of all sizes in partnership with an employment venture.

To learn more about Nexus go to: <http://nexushumanservices.com.au/home>

Nexus CEO, Lisa McPherson, will be guest speaker at our March Forum to explain how their program works and how you can refer family members and/or friends to them.

WHAT'S ON IN THE ACT THAT MIGHT INTEREST YOU

What: Mental Health Carers Voice End of Year Party Forum
Where: Belconnen Arts Centre Foyer
When: Thursday 15th December 6 – 8 pm
Who: Lydia.mhcarers@carersact.org.au or 6296 9900
RSVP: Monday 12th December
Why: to announce mental health carer representatives for 2012 – 2013, to thank those representative from 2010 – 2011, to launch the Mental Health Carers Voice website and discussion forum.

What: Mental Health Carer Survey 2011 - 2012
Where: Online
When: until Christmas Day
Who: Mental Health Council of Australia
Web: <http://www.surveygizmo.com/s3/569049/Mental-Health-Carers-Survey-2011-12>

If you would like a printed copy of the survey, please contact Carolyn Conaghan on 6285 3100

What: Empower program: leadership training for women, particularly CALD & older women.
Where: Women's Centre for Health Matters
When: February 2012
Who: Annelise Roberts 6290 2166
Why: to develop skills, knowledge and confidence to be involved in leadership and decision making roles across the ACT

MENTAL HEALTH CARERS VOICE NEWS

UPDATE OF REGISTRATION DETAILS

Carers ACT has had some trouble in sending emails to those carers with Grapevine and Homemail email addresses. We are working from many angles to try and

resolve these issues. Thank you very much to the mental health carers who have been assisting us in this. Until we know that these issues are sorted out, we will be posting all e-bulletins to people affected by this.

However, in organising this, we have discovered that our registration details need updating. Attached is a registration form. Please would you fill it out and return it to Lydia at mhcarers@carersact.org.au, or post to Mental Health Carers Voice, Carers ACT, 80 Beaufort Cres, Holt, ACT, 2615.

CARER REFERENCE GROUP

Mental Health Carers Voice (MHCV) has a new way to participate! The MHCV: Carer Reference Group is a group of carers who are available for more in-depth consultation by carer representatives and others on issues that need particular mental health carer comment and input. These may include specific committee issues, draft governmental reports, submissions, media interviews, etc. All mental health carers are eligible to be members of the Carer Reference Group. Those who are also prepared to sign the MHCV Confidentiality Form may also be included in confidential consultations that come to Carers ACT from time to time.

If this is something that interests you, please contact Lydia on mhcarers@carersact.org.au or 6296 9900.

CARER REPRESENTATIVE POSITIONS VACANT

All current MHJHADS committee & subcommittee positions are becoming vacant on 31st December. Nomination forms, committee details etc were sent out with the special e-bulletin last week. A chart of the MHJHADS committee structure, as we currently understand it, indicating the positions available, is attached to this e-bulletin. As well as the committees/subcommittees shown in this chart, there are two working group positions available: the Suicide Prevention and Early Intervention Working Group, and the Promotion, Prevention, Early Intervention Implementation and Evaluation Working Group. A Nomination Form is also attached. **Nominations are due by the 7th December 2011.**